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ABSTRACT

The International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap (ILSMH) has developed a program of partnership between member countries with varying needs and resources in order to create a better life for handicapped people throughout the world. Part I of the Partnership Guidelines contains, first, a summary of issues relevant to the development of partnership, including sections on the meaning of partnership, the myth of single-path solutions, the nature of human dignity, and organizational complexity within developing countries and the need for coordination and sharing of resources; and second, principles and strategies, including sections on the principle of alternative solutions, the principle of mutual understanding, respect and democratic learning, and the need for coordination through international organizations. Part 2 contains: (1) information on practical aspects of partnerships, including sections on prerequisites to successful projects, types of projects to be carried out, personnel, requirements of partners, and constraints; and (2) the basic format for writing a project proposal. An appendix describes the functions of the Partnership Market at the ILSMH World Congress in providing opportunities for sharing resources and information between developed and developing countries as well as among developing countries themselves. (VW)

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Partners in Development: Guidelines for Practice

developed by

the ILSMH Committee on Mobilization of Resources (MORE)

1985

International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap

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Partnership between Organisations intending to Develop Projects for Persons with Disabilities.

Guiding Principles

1. *Assistance may be offered but not imposed.*

2. *Assistance must be genuine, not patronising, have no hidden motives and be intended only for the benefit of persons with handicaps and their families.*

3. *Decisions on the form of any voluntary society, the type and range of its services, its relationships with statutory authorities and others, must be made by local people and not by outsiders.*

4. *Patterns of service development should be in accordance with local custom and culture.*

5. *Indigenous staff, trained abroad if necessary, are generally preferable to imported staff.*

6. *Success depends on local effort and interest.*

7. *Close contacts should continue in a spirit of partnership, with two-way exchange of information, people and ideas.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years the ILSMH has been developing a programme of Partnership between member countries with varying needs and resources. The major purpose of such a programme is to develop resources to create a better life for handicapped people throughout the world.

These Guidelines for Partnerships for the League have been compiled by the 'MORE' Committee who have had considerable experience and given thought to this potentially exciting approach to improving not only the quality of life for disabled people - but greater international understanding between culturally and economically different nations of the world.

It contains:

1. Some issues and principles of aid giving and cooperative exchange developed by the past chairman of the 'MORE' Committee, the late Dr. G. Allan Roeher, with additions by Mr. Diamond Daniel, Prof. Kaoru Yamaguchi and myself.

2. Some conclusions and practical guides developed by myself and the Director of the PATH programmes in Partners of the Americas, Gregory Dixon.

3. A suggested format for requests.

4. An appendix containing the Partnership Market Introduction as used prior to November 1984.

Dr. Marigold J. Thorburn,
Chairperson, ILSMH "MORE" Committee

PART 1

Some Issues Relevant to the Development of Partnership

1. On the Meaning of Partnership

The concept of Partnership is a powerful force at the disposal of mankind greater even than technology and wealth.

Partnerships, understood and enlightened, are powerful international strategies for meaningful assistance and sharing.

True Partnership involves recognition of mutual benefit from the relationship and the subsequent actions that result.

2. The Myth of Single-Path Solutions

For decades, high technology and scientifically-oriented societies have acquired a belief that their approach is better. Yet, trial and experience are not proving them exclusively superior to other cultural and more simplified approaches to the problem. The shift back to self-help, family and community-oriented philosophies and strategies is evidence of greater and growing appreciation of less costly, more realistic, intervention strategies.

As we enter the post-industrial era, with energy crises, contaminated environments and an appreciation that resources are not unlimited, there is a growing

recognition that not all needs have to be met by high levels of technology and professionalism but by simpler solutions. A powerful example of this approach is reflected in the World Health Organisation's Manual Training the Disabled in the Community which depends on close collaboration between local parents and health care workers and on the use of simple but systematic principles of teaching and rehabilitation.

3. On the Nature of Human Dignity

When in doubt about how best to be of help, picture the people and situation that needs serving and ask yourself

- will what is contemplated be of real or optimal value?
- will it maintain or enhance the dignity of the recipient(s)?
- will it be compatible with the cultural and community attitudes and standards of those being helped?
- will it lead to self-determination and self-confidence?
- will it help them to help themselves?
- are both partners convinced of these, and has there been enough dialogue?

4. On the Organizational Complexity within Developing Countries and the Need for Coordination and Sharing of Resources.

The situation facing most developing countries is often that they have a wide range of 'aid' relationships with other countries - missionary or religious orders, United Nations, and government-to- government agencies, universities, foundations and national and international voluntary organizations. In addition, some areas of the world have regional federations serving categorical groups of handicapped people. All kinds and variations of bi- and multi-lateral arrangements and "partnerships" abound. Many developing countries now also have a range of indigenous programmes - public and private.

Another organisation - Partners of the Americas - has also been developing partnerships between the USA and Latin-American and Caribbean countries in this field. This programme has a much wider scope in terms of the target groups and a much narrower scope in terms of the participants. The former can be almost any area of human endeavour (culture, sports, health, agriculture as well as PATH - Partners Appropriate Technology for the Handicapped). The participating partnerships between two specific areas (such as Western New York/ Jamaica, New Jersey/Haiti, Michigan/Belize, Oregon/ Costa Rica, etc) are in a fixed relationship over a long period of time This gives a very different flavour in terms of commitment, involvement, cultural exchange and time frames than short term partnerships which are mainly on a project-to-project basis with no fixed geographical liaisons.

There is a risk of proliferation of fragmented, conflicting efforts - each meritorious, but its potential undermined or underused. We must also remember that "government - private" relationships either intra-nationally or inter-nationally may create difficulties, especially in the selection of participants to benefit from international activities.

Efforts at coordination and improved pooling of these internal and external resources are gaining momentum and emerging in a variety of forms e.g. national societies for specific disabilities, national coordinating councils for disabled persons, resource centres and "Institutes". These activities and organizations represent an important and rational step in self-help and self-determination on the part of recipient countries and they are equally valuable vehicles for the external provider or aid bodies to assist in a more relevant and effective way.

An important "Partners for Development" principle for provider bodies would be to work through any such existing coordination mechanisms, where possible, or to stimulate their development where none exist or where they are still weak or in the formative stage. In some instances it may benefit a country or region more to direct the aid toward the realization or strengthening of such developments.

Coordination of external or international support within the provider countries is another way of augmenting the benefits from the support provided. Some industrialized countries have coordination entities,

such as Institutes or inter-agency bodies, which have the capability of exchanging information and realizing more orderly planning and delivery of resources to recipient nations. Others could be encouraged to establish informal, national inter-agency committees to exchange information on inter-national activity on behalf of handicapped people, and pool or coordinate human and fiscal resources where possible.

Principles and Strategies

These changing conditions and experience suggest certain principles and strategies from which guidelines could be developed for the formation of optimal partnerships between provider and receiver bodies.

1. The Principle of Alternative Solutions

There are many very different approaches to helping handicapped people. They range from low to high technology, from under - to highly-trained personnel, from parental and volunteer to professional and research initiative, from few to abundant resources. It matters not which approach is more elegant, so long as it is appropriate and works.

2. Principle of Mutual Understanding, Respect and Democratic Learning

As indicated elsewhere, much aid comes with conditions attached, such as requirements to use human and fiscal resources made available to reflect donor philosophies politics and practices. This expectation may be specific or implied.

One way of minimizing this dilemma is by way of an exchange of memoranda of understanding between the contracting bodies or individuals. Such a document is a friendly one, expressing beliefs, philosophies, cultural orientation, principles, practices and objectives of the respective parties, or their organizations. It might also include expectations. Other matters could include agreement to: bi- or multi-lateral consulta-

tions or an acknowledgement that sharing is bilateral and benefits are reciprocal.

The desire for this kind of understanding is sometimes voiced by recipient bodies, but too frequently misunderstood or unacknowledged by the aid givers. In other cases where people are less sure of themselves, they may be afraid to articulate their views, as they fear they may lose the assistance.

The Memorandum of Understanding is not perceived as a legal document. Rather, it is a vehicle for stimulating democratic learning. It helps assure and facilitate both parties to go through this process before misunderstandings occur, or dignity is affected. It can be a preamble to Partners in Development arrangements.

This strategy and exercise could include such fundamental considerations as:

a) Alternative strategies of staff training and development (e.g. the League's Manpower Model concept)

b) Serving all disabled persons rather than some.

c) Avoidance of direct application of principles, practices and use of materials originally designed for the cultural, economic and technological conditions of donor countries.

d) Emphasis on equality of partnership between consumers and providers (parents and professionals; disabled/handicapped with service staff, etc.)

e) The stimulation of advocacy and self-advocacy organizations.

f) The right to self-determination and decision-making on the part of the recipient, but conversely extending the courtesy of inviting and listening to advice from donors and keeping them informed.

3. Coordination Through International Organizations

Related to the above is the joint obligation of bilateral donor and recipient agencies to support and coordinate with "third party organizations" - national, regional and international bodies which do not always provide direct services but whose role is to facilitate other organizations to assist or benefit. These include entities such as national coordinating councils, the ILSMH, Disabled Peoples International, the Asian Federation for Persons with Mental Handicap, the Caribbean Association on Mental Retardation and other Developmental Disabilities, Network Africa and the Partners of the Americas Path Resource Centres. Support for such centres and networks has been advocated by the Disabled Persons' Unit in the United Nations. In this way optimal support can be generated from the government-to-government foreign aid programmes of Western Countries, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and others. This will also reinforce such

projects as the League's Partnership Market and better utilize and strengthen the emerging institutes, resource centres and networks.

G. Allan Roeher

PART 2

SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF PARTNERSHIPS

There are several aspects to be considered. These can be listed under the headings:

1. Pre-requisites to successful partnership projects.
2. Types of projects to be carried out.
3. Personnel to participate.
4. Requirements of Partners.

1. Pre-Requisites to Successful Projects.

   1. There should be no political aspects to the project, either party politics or internal politics.

   2. Even though the less developed country is usually the recipient of assistance, it can also contribute certain things which will not only commit resources but hopefully will enlarge the horizons and experience of the more developed partner. In-kind contributions include provision of home-stays, hospitality, transportation and other cultural activities.

   3. There must be no exploitation of less developed country persons, materials or information. Some professionals may largely be motivated to enhance their own reputations by publishing results of their projects and research.

4. Partners should be thoroughly briefed and orientated with information about the culture, practices or organisations, decision making processes, customs etc. They must go to the partner country with an open mind, prepared to adapt their own habits and attitudes to fit in as far as possible with customs very different from their own.

2. Types of Projects to be carried out

1. Projects should not be too ambitious. They should be realistic, otherwise frustration and disillusionment will ensue.

2. Priority should be given to projects that will have the greatest multiplier effect. For example, training of local technicians or parents to make adaptive aids on the spot would be preferable to sending one professional to a more developed country for training or obtaining a supply of appliances that cannot be repaired.

3. Where training is provided, lower priority should be given to the advancement of single professionals, unless the person is coming from and returning to a programme which has built in the multiplying effect after they return. Training also needs to be in the context of existing service delivery or a planned extension of this. Teaching new techniques without an implementation plan will result in wastage of skills.

4. Projects should meet locally perceived needs rather than the outsiders' perceptions. However, goals and strategies should be agreed on by both sides.

5. The project should be clearly specified in an agreement (See format).

3. Personnel to Participate

1. People with open minds who can communicate readily with others, adapt to a new culture, and be sensitive to the reactions and responses of the host country.

2. Continuity is also important, though this has to be balanced with sharing of the experiences amongst a wider range of people to achieve balance.

3. The person will need to be prepared for training people with lower levels of education in a wide variety of skills.

4. Requirements of Partners

A certain amount of formal proposal and report writing should be required to ensure that the projects have the full approval and backing of the requesting country or organisation. This will also facilitate the record keeping of the intermediary or coordination agency. A minimum could include:

1. A proposal written to a certain format (see sample) by the requesting organisation, signed by the chairman/president as well as the executive officer. This would be sent to the intermediary agency/coordinator and forwarded to the offering or donor association.

2. In the case of an organisation offering assistance, the form currently used by the Partnership Market could be used.

3. A form or memorandum of agreement could be used and signed by both sides of the partnership when goals, strategies and activities have been agreed upon.

4. A report of the project should be required within one month of the termination of the project, with interim reports if the project lasts 6 months or more.

Some Constraints to be recognised

1. The time of personnel involved at both ends.
2. Paternalistic attitudes or behaviour.
3. Using the project as a stepping stone to emigration or personal advancement.
4. Cultural, religious differences having a profound effect on the attitudes to disabled people.
5. Language barriers.
6. Climatic and food differences.
7. Lack of serious intentions, using the trip as a holiday or "joy ride".

BASIC FORMAT FOR WRITING A PROJECT PROPOSAL

The following are the basic essential items that need to be included in writing a project proposal, particularly where a grant is being requested.

- Title of Project
  - . Agency responsible for Project
  - . Person responsible for Project - the Director or Coordinator.
  - . Goal(s) of Project - the overall expectations for the project on a long term basis. Is it part of some other project?
  - . Objectives - What is the project expected to achieve in operational terms?

- Background and Rationale for Project
  - . why are you doing this project?
  - . what is the background or history of the agency's previous involvement and intended plans for development which provide a reason for carrying out the project?
  - . describe existing resources in your programme.

- Strategies for Implementation

  This is the approach that you are going to use and includes several components:

  (1) Activities or tasks to be carried out;
    - . by whom?
    - . how are they going to be performed?
    - . when and how often will they be done? (Time-table with dates)

. using what materials and methods?
. where will the project be carried out?

- Inputs needed for the project - This may include a breakdown of inputs required from the sponsoring agency, plus inputs requested from the funding agency. These inputs may include: personnel, training, money, materials, equipment, etc.

- Outputs (criteria for achievement)
What measurable outcomes are expected at the end of the project? e.g. how many people trained, or how many children receiving what kinds of services.

- Budget

- Summary - It may be necessary to provide a brief summary of the main items under each of the headings.

Appendix : The ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET

1. What is the **ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET ?**

The "Partnership Market" is an initiative of the International League:

- to help people of different associations to become acquainted with each other,

- to give countries that are looking for assistance in the development of a service project the opportunity to search for a partner ready to provide assistance,

- to help countries learn about areas and worthwhile projects where assistance would be appreciated.

2. What is the basic idea of the **ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET ?**

The International League is not rich in financial means. But it is very rich in its human resources, its assets being dedicated people, innovative ideas and a long experience. Therefore the International League wants to act as a "clearing house" and as "honest broker", encouraging and assisting its Member Organizations:

- to facilitate the exchange of resources,

- to help with the transmission of knowledge and information where it is needed,

- to further partnerships between associations and countries.

3. How does the ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET work ?

Just as in any market place, one has to bring supply and demand together. In our case, this means that associations that request assistance have a chance to present their ideas and projects to those associations that are interested and capable of providing the type of assistance needed

- We want to encourage people to think not only about big projects, but also about small examples of mutual assistance;

- some developing countries may hesitate to try and define clearly and put down on paper what they need - we want to overcome that hesitation;

- some more developed countries may lack the knowledge of how best to provide assistance - specific requests and examples of good practice will help to stimulate their thinking.

- some societies may well, at the same time, have something to offer and something to ask for

4. What can you expect of the ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET?

As in any market, this depends completely on the people present. Obviously, one should not come with too high expectations to avoid possible disappointment. But one should also be aware that this pool of dedicated people meeting in a spirit of friendship may develop its own dynamic resources. You may find a partner in a specific project that will benefit mentally handicapped people. You will for sure find friends sharing the same concerns and hopes.

5.. Who can participate in the ILSMH PARTNERSHIP MARKET ?

Only ILSMH Member Societies are entitled to conclude agreements.

People in countries where there is no League Member Society are also allowed to participate and can ask for the forms directly from the Secretariat of the International League.

* * *

Successful Partnership Markets have already been held at the 8th World Congress of the League in Nairobi, Kenya, at the 3rd Pacific Regional Conference in Wellington, New Zealand and following the General Assembly in Madrid, Spain. Full reports on all these are available from the League.

A Partnership Market will also be held during the 9th World Congress of the ILSMH which will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1986.

Remember, that Partnership Markets provide opportunities for sharing of resources and information not just between developed and developing countries but also between developing countries themselves. Some of the most effective partnerships have taken this form.